



ACTION

FREE**SOUTH WEST**

MAY 2000 • ISSUE 18

THE WESTCOUNTRY ACTIVIST NETWORK NEWSLETTER

MUMIA ABU JAMAL



The campaign for justice for the Black-American political prisoner Mumia Abu Jamal has been gathering force in the South West. March 4th saw a demonstration of about 80 activists calling for the release of Jamal and an end to the racist death penalty.

The demonstration was one of eight that took place in Britain as part of an International Day of

Action in solidarity with Mumia, and was followed by solidarity broadcasts from Interference FM on the 5th and 12th. Since then there have been film showings and banner drops over the M32 as well as other efforts to raise awareness of Mumia's plight.

Mumia was sentenced to death in 1982 for the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. He has been on death row ever since, and has had no physical contact with his family in all this time. He has never touched his grandchildren.

Judge Sabo, who presided over Mumia's case has sent more people to death row than any other member of the American Judiciary, and is a member of the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police - which is now actively campaigning for Mumia's execution.

Mumia has always protested his innocence and claims that he was framed because of his positive coverage of MOVE (the radical Black

anti-capitalist autonomist group), whilst working as a radio journalist. Also his membership of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defence ensured him a government file from the age of 14.

During his trial, Mumia was denied his constitutional right to conduct his own defence, barred from the courtroom at certain times and subjected to extreme judicial bias.

These facts were reiterated by Amnesty International in a report it published in February. The report documented improper judicial procedures, dodgy forensic evidence, police intimidation of witnesses, and an obvious bias against Jamal from Sabo. Furthermore, Amnesty stated overall failure of Jamal's trial to reach minimum international standards of justice and judicial fairness.

Mumia's life currently lies in the balance waiting to hear whether or not he will be granted justice. The time for action has never been greater.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the better-late-than-never, Mayday 2000 edition of ASW. Chock full of info on local campaigns and activities, new groups and a sprinkling of international news (and hopefully not too many mistakes). Also included in this issue is a free Mayday pullout with carry-ons and contacts, a brief history of Mayday.

First off, hope you all have a top day out on the 1st and remember to keep us informed of what went on. Send in pics, reports and comments on your own experiences.

Also at the moment we are in desperate need of more news from the region, so please e-mail us, use the post or give us a call to say what's going down.

We also need more money. Unfortunately this capitalist economy we live in doesn't make concessions for small-scale radical new-sheets. So keep those stamps coming, and any cash or cheques would be gladly received.

HINKLEY STINKLY

Controversial nuclear plant Hinkley 'A' was dealt a fresh blow when atomic engineer John Large called for it to be permanently shut down. He exposed serious design and operation flaws during a public meeting in Taunton this March, claiming the 35-year old Hinkley 'A' would fail an operating license if built today.

Large outlined how a fractured

coolant duct could cause an uncontrollable uranium fuel fire due to 'embrittlement' of the reactor shell, which lacks the globe-shaped 'secondary-containment' required by modern regulations.

In February an Environment Agency enforcement notice on the station would have closed it down if it hadn't already been shut for long-term repairs. It follows the discovery that plant operators

BNFL passed doctored safety readings to the EA for two years. BNFL's Chief Executive recently resigned over falsification of documents for MOX fuel sent to Japan. Jim Pagington of the EA said the real readings could show Hinkley breaching pollution targets. They may also prosecute Hinkley over faulty cooling pond filters discovered last year. Meanwhile the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

has shown concern about rising levels of waste stored at Hinkley, which if exposed to water could cause a hydrogen fire.

The Stop Hinkley group is calling for the plant's immediate closure to prevent unnecessary build-up of waste, and want public consultation over plans to use Hinkley 'A' as a nuclear dump.

The campaign also planned street theatre for Chernobyl Day, April 26th.

**NEWS
IN
BRIEF**

NO MORE MONKEY BUSINESS
Infamous monkey farm Shamrock has shut down after 46 years in business. The Sussex farm, where monkeys were bred for scientific experimentation worldwide, blamed the closure on animal liberationists' non-stop campaign which has seen constant demonstrations highlighting Shamrock's activities, and involved mass blockades and appeals to Shamrock workers.

ff: STSM, PO Box 3090, Brighton BN1 3QU 07020 936956

GENETICALLY MODIFIED TRUTH

A new report called 'Biotech - The Next Generation' savages claims by genetically modified food corporations that GM food provides health benefits. It says that promoting balanced diets, tackling poverty, improving sanitation and raising educational standards would address poor nutrition in developing countries better than GM crops. The report also calls claims made by biotech companies that GM food would enhance diets in the western world as "much hyped".

ETHICAL INVESTMENT?

Animal rights activists have adopted a novel tactic in their campaign against notorious animal experimenters Huntingdon Life Sciences. The BUAV Reform Group have taken to holding pickets/demos outside the homes of individual shareholders in Huntingdon. Some shareholders were so disgusted to learn of Huntingdon's devilish operations that they have joined the group to discourage others investing in animal abuse. An earlier anonymous campaign reportedly convinced enough institutional investors to shy away from HLS to slash 30% from share values. The protests outside shareholders' homes - whose addresses were located by a simple check on HLS at Companies House - have been entirely non-violent.

"FOUR LEGS GOOD, TWO LEGS BAD"

Like many other Free Mumia groups around the country, Bristol had the unpleasant experience of legendary Trot bandwagoneers - the Socialist Worker's Party - attempting to use the life of a political prisoner as a springboard for getting some new recruits. The Bristol group was strictly non-partisan so that all efforts could be focussed on saving Mumia's life. However, the SWoPies refused to honour the original agreements that it had made with the group, and used the March 4th demonstration as an opportunity to make a few bucks by selling papers.

FED UP WITH THE FIT UP'S

Reclaim The Streets' demon status in the wake of J18/N30 stepped up a notch in Bristol this month with astonishing revelations from the Police in a trial and a lengthy smear story across five pages in local paper the Evening Post.

At the Bristol Crown Court trial video evidence taken at the July '99 Bristol Street Party by the Avon & Somerset Constabulary helicopter contradicted Police statements. Police had initially arrested the defendant - who had stopped on the other side of the road to watch the RTS but who was unconnected to it - to prevent further breach of the peace, claiming he was coordinating the protest.

Ground commander Chief Inspector Brian Schofield, his tactical adviser PC Alistair Price and helicopter observer PC David Chapman tied themselves in knots after the video proved both Schofield's and Price's accounts - that Chapman gave a clear description of two men, one of whom the defendant matched, whom he believed were RTS organisers - wrong. Instead, the video recorded Chapman describing "lots of people on pedal cycles with mobile phones" in vague terms. On cross-examination Price admitted that his "recollection was completely wrong" despite his notes being written just hours after the incident.

Apart from the Police being caught fitting the evidence around the arrest, there were sensational disclosures from Schofield on the Police objectives for the day. Schofield revealed that their strategy was "to keep protesters away

from the city centre, and to try and keep the motorway open"; given that neither of these objectives were met despite the massive Police operation, it would appear CI Schofield felt he had a lot of egg on his face. Furthermore he admitted he knew his subordinate Inspector Creed had been in contact with RTS coordinators before the event, yet claimed he himself did not know the outcome of these meetings. When pressed, he admitted that Insp Creed had actually introduced him personally to an RTS negotiator at the Castle Park gathering point.

Meanwhile the Post devoted a long article - plus lead editorial - to a character assassination of someone they claimed was Bristol's "Reclaim the Streets supremo".

At face value it just seems to be a typical hack job from a reactionary provincial rag. But certain elements suggest a specific political agenda. Firstly there is the context: the story appears long after the event, and there is no court case being reported. Second, there is the content: much is made of his "middle class upbrining" - it was even titled "Middle Class Warrior"; the paper also mentions his arrest at an earlier RTS and that his leg was broken at the Carnival Against Capitalism - hinting he is a violent person. So why?

The mention of MayDay, June 18 and Reclaim the Streets in the piece are a clue. In the run-up to MayDay and the new Terror Bill, most national papers have carried scare-stories about activists, employing the same phrases or sentiments: "eco-terrorists", "so-called/self-styled anti-capitalists", "organised over the internet" etc. Many contain

ludicrous assertions that are quickly recirculated in subsequent reports - for instance, the unsourced Sunday Times article last year claiming RTS in London were "stockpiling illegal weapons worth thousands of pounds" (17/10/99) has been recycled several times without proof; an Observer piece (31/10/99) rehashed old smears about treespiking in the US, again falsely claiming that it was a widely-used tactic and that it had killed people.

One constant in reports is the juxtaposition of descriptions of property damage at mass actions with activists' own words, often with the effect of making the activist - and by extension all activists - appear either deceitful or naive.

Perhaps the most telling element to this disinformation is the mixture of accuracy with outright falsehood; in the Evening Post article there is the contrast of the legwork of the bulk of the feature, tying in many elements going back five years, with the statement "Attendance [at London RTS meetings] is strictly by invitation only" - despite the easily checked fact meeting times and locations are publicised on the RTS infoline, and meetings are open to all.

All this evidence - innuendo, unsourced smears, crude inventions, the same words and phrases cropping up constantly - point to one thing: a concerted effort by the State, through the Police, the secret police and their media conduits, to utterly discredit and fragment what is an ever-growing, global movement fighting capitalism.

PISSED WITH "THE POST"

Following the Bristol Evening Post's smear article on Reclaim the Streets 15 activists tried to get a group interview with the infamous hack Chris McGuire (the article's author) to discuss issues of accuracy and press accountability.

Broadly based around the "I am Spartacus" theme, the mob dressed up with labels stating, "middle class wanna-be", "Spartacus" and comments in a similar vein.

Specially prepared for the action was an edition of "The Evening

Pest" a spoof of the Post that certainly had more integrity as well as an accurate account of the Post's real agenda and sensationalist antics.

Despite the anarchist pranksters attempts to keep the whole show on a very tongue-in-cheek, non-violent line, Post workers got steamed up and heavy handed. Probably incensed that anyone would dare to question their obvious purity, also the passers by who made comments on how the paper had always printed rubbish really got their goat. The

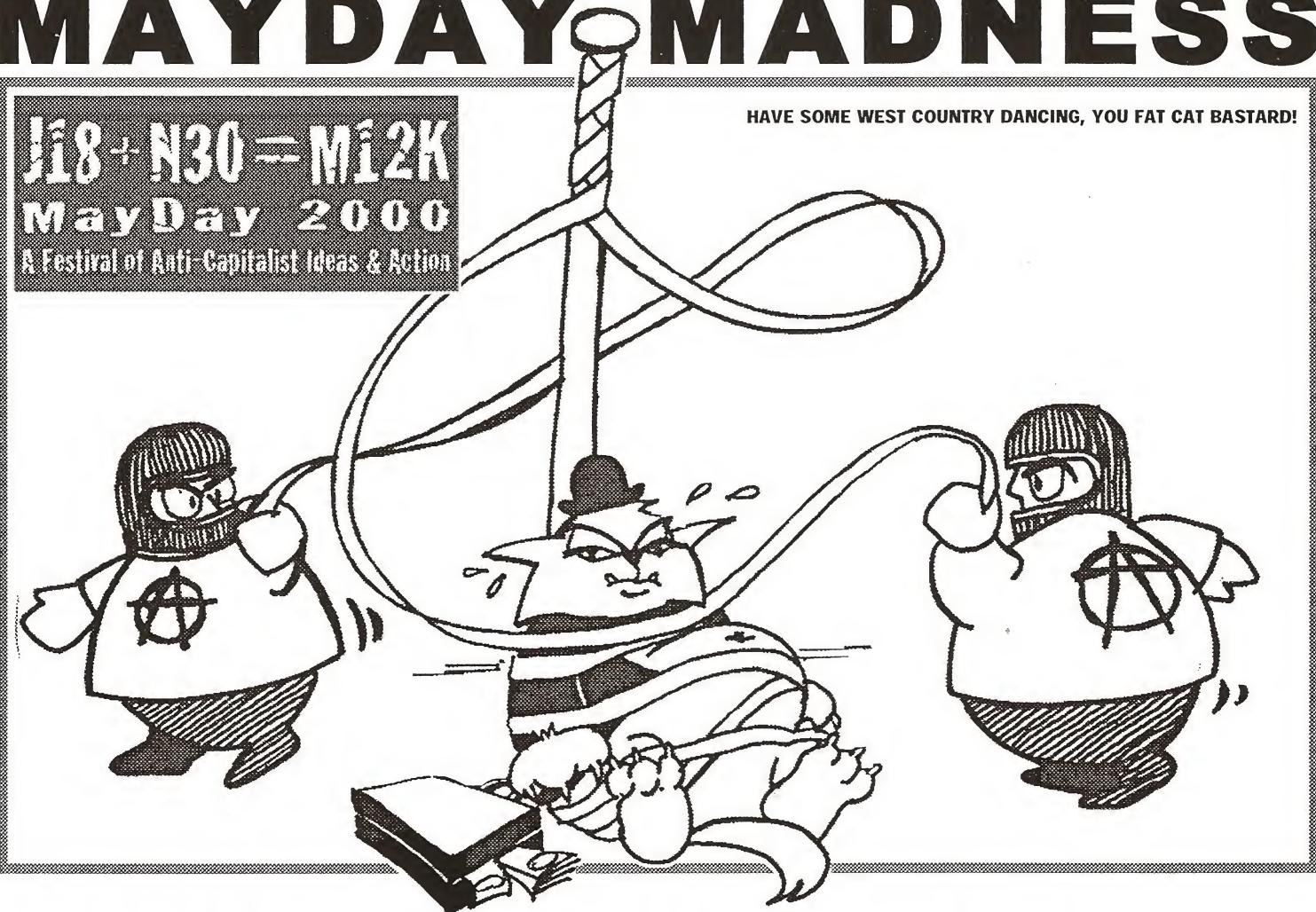
police were called and two protesters were arrested for Breach of the Peace but were released later without charge.

Chris McGuire's journalism is a list of right-wing, bigoted rants against homeless people, beggars, activists and environmentalists, to name a few. He specialises in personal rants that victimise and sensationalise issues, with no intent to make progressive contributions. Watch out for this one in the future. His e-mail address is in the Post, so let him know how you feel.

MAYDAY MADNESS

J18+N30=M12K
May Day 2000
A Festival of Anti-Capitalist Ideas & Action

HAVE SOME WEST COUNTRY DANCING, YOU FAT CAT BASTARD!



WHY MAYDAY?

Mayday 2000 will see hundreds of thousands of activists taking action against the destructive forces of global capitalism. While many people will be packing their cars for a long weekend by the seaside, others will be reclaiming Mayday and showing that there is more to life than a Bank Holiday.

May 1st is the next Global Day of Action Against Capitalism. It follows on with the energy and determination that was present at J18, N30 and most recently the A16 demos against the IMF summit in Washington. Groups have been organising for Mayday for months and actions will be taking place in over 52 cities in 17 countries worldwide.

Activities will be diverse and range from strikes and traditional revolutionary marches, to Guerrilla

Gardening, street theatre and bookfairs. The main thrust for the day – apart from the obvious desire to slay the beast of global capitalism – is to reclaim Mayday as a festival of resistance.

Traditionally a Pagan celebration of Spring, fertility and harmony with nature, Mayday was an annual event for centuries. That was until it was outlawed by killjoy Puritans in the 1600's, who wanted to extend the time spent at work to support the newborn capitalist system.

The spirit of Mayday continued as an act of defiance, but did not emerge as a mass celebration until it was declared International Worker's Day in 1889. This was in response to the execution of the Haymarket Martyrs. The Martyrs were 8 anarchist men who were arrested and tried for their

libertarian beliefs, after being present at a rally in Haymarket Square, Chicago on May 4th, 1886. The rally was part of a US and Canada-wide general strike that kicked off on Mayday to campaign for an 8 hour working day. 5 of the men were executed, one committed suicide and the other two were released a couple of years later, when it was revealed that the bomb thrower had been a police agent (surprise, surprise). Ever since Mayday has been an important day for the international labour movement

This year the combination of the Pagan focus on rebirth and renewal, and the celebration of political radicalism, provides an important opportunity for a global festival of diversity in the face of the monolith of neoliberalism.

The global resistance movement is

growing daily. Before the tear gas had cleared in Washington, people were mobilising for May 1st and planning to shut down the next IMF summit in Prague this September. No matter how the world's media corporations try to reconstruct a protest in an attempt to deny its power, the mere fact that the number of mass mobilisations against capitalism and all of its undemocratic institutions, is increasing is undeniable.

As such, M12K is a prime opportunity for the celebration of strengths through diversity and global solidarity. It emphasises the importance of revolution as an everyday dynamic process, coincided with the need for all of us to deal with each others differences, and to focus on working together to provide for our common needs.

“ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE”

EVENTS | WESTERN FRONT

APRIL

28th April - 1st May: MayDay 2000 - a festival of anarchist ideas and action in London and regionally.

29th - 30th: MayDay Conference, north London - Anarchist Bookfair-style gathering 10am-6pm, nearest tube Holloway Road; ffi: 020 8374 5027

29th: Action Against WTO, Bristol; ffi: Bristol Coalition Against The WTO c/o Wilf Mound 0117 977 5601

30th: A30/Stop the Terrorism Bill photo call, London - meet 2pm at Highbury Fields, Highbury, London E5 (nearest tube Highbury & Islington) to let Mr Tony and Mad Jack know what you think of reclassifying radicalism as terror tactics; dress for direct action; ffi: A30 group, Dept., 29 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M14 5LW Tel: 01273 298192

<a30@nematode.freeserve.co.uk> <http://drink.to.dissent/>

1st: MayDay - Global Day Against Capitalism / Beltane / International Workers' Day etc... 'avin' it in London and everywhere else; London: Guerrilla Gardening, meet Parliament Square, 11am; International Workers Day picket in solidarity with Italian revolutionaries & against new 'anti' terrorist legislation.

Everywhere. One minutes silence for the victims of capitalism. 1 pm at a ware memorial near you.

Bristol; Mayfayre, street theatre, seed sowing, fun and frivolity, meet Castle Park, 12:30. Later on meetings, talks, music and food at Open Space.

Exeter; Leafletting, 12 noon on Bedford Square (off the High Street)

2nd: Bristol Spring Clean, meet 10am Broadmead. Food, Health & Environment Day, Bristol Open Space.

3rd: Latin America Day, Bristol Open Space.

4th: Justice Day, Bristol Open Space. Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin, 7:30pm, Malcolm X Centre, Ashley Rd, Bristol.

5th: Bristol Links, Bristol Open Space. Critical Mass, meet Arnolfini, Bristol, 5pm.

Numerous Mayday activities are planned for the South West, guaranteeing you a grand day out wherever you are...

Bristol Open Space will be opened for the entire Mayday week as a centre for ideas, talks, music, films, food and fun.

A building will be squatted in a prime city location to create a temporary autonomous zone. What better a way to celebrate than subverting the wasted urban space of capitalism to provide a groundswell of ideas and radical action.

"We are breaking through the isolation of modern society," says Barry Cades from Open Space. "We want to share ideas about how we can change the future now, so that we can create a mutual society that is the opposite to the oppression and exploitation of capitalism."

Open Space will be hosting different theme days, involving

slide shows, workshops, and a revolutionary tour of the 18th Century Bristol Riots.

The **Mayfayre** is Bristol's May 1st action. Meet at Castle Park at 12:30. Activities include street theatre, seed sowing, samba and plenty of Maypole merriment. Broadmead will receive a **Spring Clean** on Tuesday, meet at 10am to find out what's going on. The week will be rounded off with a **Critical Mass** on Friday. As they say in London: "Let's piss off Prescott with pedal power."

Following on from **Exeter's** successful N30 event (where local activists from different groups joined together in common cause against global capitalism), there will be creative leafletting and anti-capitalist protest. Gather on Mayday at 12 noon, Bedford Square (off the High Street).

Red Ant are calling for people to assemble at local war

memorials (at 1pm) to hold one minutes silence for all the victims of capitalism, and then disperse. Show your respects.

On Thursday, May 4th, **Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin** comes to the Malcolm X Centre, as part of his tour of England. As an ex-member of the radical Black Panther Party, Kom'boa will tell his tale of state repression and racism in the USA. He will also be talking about his experiences as an anarchist, and his current legal battle as one of the Chattanooga 3.

He is one of three men arrested for disruptive behaviour in public at a demonstration against police brutality in Chattanooga. They now face a year's imprisonment for publicising the 35 police killings in Chattanooga since 1980, most of the victims were Black and working class. Come along to hear some radical history, and to see what you can do to help.

OUT OF TOWN ANTICS

A30

The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) is about criminalising dissent. The laws go further than anything the Tory's brought in, and it makes the CJA seem a mere trifle. Reclassifying terrorism from the FBI's definition, The PTA could potentially label anyone involved in direct action (no matter how loosely) a terrorist.

What the PTA does show, is the fear that the Government has from the ever-growing anti-capitalist planetary movement. Those in power have no greater fear than the possibility of their "citizens" taking control of their own lives, which is why Tony's Cronies and Straw's Whores are falling over one another to get to us first. So if you don't think that a desire for equality and freedom makes you a terrorist, gather on April 30th at Highbury Fields, London, 2pm for a Class of 2000

photoshoot. Come dressed for direct action and say a big collective "Fuck You" to Jack and Tony. (ffi on the PTA see Urban 75, Squall or the A30 Group)

GUERRILLA GARDENING

If you've got green fingers and fancy taking back some land in Capital City, meet at Parliament Square, 11am on the 1st. Bring gardening tools, trees, seedlings and plants. Revel in your gardening glory as obsolete symbols of urban imperialism are transformed into lovely green social spaces for all.

BOOKFAIR & CONFERENCE

Two days of talks, workshops and films. From everything from Class War to Earth First!, the Russian Revolution to pirate radio, and oh so much more. There will also be lots of stalls, books and campaigns. An ideal opportunity for some networking. What more can I say? All at the Holloway Rd conference centre, from 29th-30th May,

RISKY BUSINESS

Hopefully Mayday will pass without too much police brutality, but let's be realistic. The cops have made their position pretty clear, and the media has played its part in setting the scene for some reactionary state violence.

Remember to take precautions, have a good solicitor's number at hand, and keep an eye out for each other. If you see anyone being arrested, try to get their details and where they're being taken to and pass it on to a legal observer.

If you get nicked, remember that you do still have a right to silence, so use it. Police interviews are intelligence gathering sessions, if they had enough evidence they generally wouldn't be questioning you.

It is also very important to support anyone who gets sent down. After all, if solidarity ends at the prison gates then were all pretty screwed. People are still being sought in the post-J18 witch hunt, and quite a few people have been sentenced. There is a J18 prisoner in the South West, so give him some support. Send stamps, letters, postcards etc., but remember prisoner's mail is read. So be sensible.

Sean Brown (Sept 99 sentenced to 12 months), BP5610, HMYOI Ashfield, Sherwood Road, Pucklechurch, Bristol, BS16 9LY.

SOLICITOR'S NUMBERS**BRISTOL**

Douglas & Partners: 0117 955 2663
0117 963 5044

LONDON

Bindman & Partners: 0171 8334433

Blavo Sharp: 0797 991 1082

Moss & Co: 0207 240 6350

Taylor Nichol: 0207 272 8336

0207 2720850

MAYDAY CONTACTS

Mayday South West;

<http://www.maydaysw.fsnet.co.uk/>
Exeter: PO Box 185, Exeter EX4 4EW

Bristol Mayday Group; Box 13, 82 Colston Street, Bristol BS1 5BB
<bristolmayday@angelfire.com>

Bristol Open Space; An Open Space, Box 51, 82 Colston Street, Bristol BS1 5BB, 07967 775172 or 0117 902 0025

<m1openspace@mailcity.com>

National/London: BM MayDay, London WC1N 3XX
<http://www.freespeech.org/mayday2k/>

Nottingham:
<http://www.krang.demon.co.uk/>

Manchester:
<http://www.mayday2000.fsnet.co.uk/>

Glasgow:
<http://www.mayfirst.fsnet.co.uk/>

International Lobster Party:

<http://www.lobster1.dircon.co.uk>

Reclaim the Streets:

www.reclaimthestreets.net

www.gn.apc.org/rts

Guerrilla Gardening:

www.primalseeds.org

People's Global Action:

www.agp.org



WASHINGTON DC

Thousands of activists descended on Washington for the A16 (April 16th) actions against the World Bank and the International Monetary Funds first meetings of the year. Despite spending \$1million on riot control gear and a huge police operation, the boys in blue were unable to prevent the protests from disrupting the meeting. At times the cops were outmanouered by the activists and the 700 plus arrests clogged up the bearocracy etc.

Washington's finest resorted to tear gas, night sticks and heroic charges into the crowd on motorbikes to disperse the angry hoards - all to no avail. And their early attempt to crush dissent by shutting

down the A16 HQ on fire violations (having a propane gas cooker in the kitchen, apparently), were seen by all as the shallow gesture the were.

Yet again anti-globalisation activists have forced powermoungers like the Fund and the Bank to justify their actions, calls which are amplified amidst claims by the WB's former chief economist that its activities ran counter to open and democratic society.

The next IMF summit will be in Prague at the end of September. Watch this space to find out more info, including an IMF teach-in to be held in London.

Ffi: <http://dc.indymedia.org/>
<http://www.a16.org>

MEXICO

Students occupying the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) campus in Mexico City met the force of more than two thousand riot police on February 6th. The police operation against the nine month long occupation (in protest over fees and privatisation of the education system) resulted in 632 arrests and a further 175 were detained. Five days earlier 37 students were wounded and 248 arrested when a UNAM-affiliated secondary school was

evicted. Many were refused bail on grounds they were "a danger to society", 85 were charged with terrorism, and 200 went on hunger strike to highlight police violence.

In protest 100,000 people marched on Mexico City, amid allegations that students have been 'disappeared' to Campo Militar Numero Uno. Two weeks later in Tepatepec outraged locals captured 68 policemen after a similar assault on a student-occupied college. Sheepish-looking cops were stripped to the waist and paraded in the town square whilst demands were made for the release of everyone arrested.

The violent clampdown on student dissent has led many to fear that the Mexican state is preparing its forces for more violence against the Zapatista's in Chiapas.

COLOMBIA

Activists stopped American oil giants Occidental Petroleum (Oxy) drilling in the Norte de Santander region of Colombia in February.

Several thousand campesinos, students and union members joined Uwa and other indigenous people to blockade access to the drill site and demand an end to government oil exploration in the area. The response was a brutal attack from soldiers and riot police armed with tear gas,

bulldozers and clubs. Food and medical supplies were withheld from protesters, eleven of whom are missing. Three children have also died.

Two US activists drew attention to the situation when they disrupted a Democratic Party debate in New York and called on major Oxy shareholder Vice-President Al Gore to intervene to prevent the rape of U'wa land.

STOP PRESS

Costa Rica, renowned as Latin America's most stable state, has seen Costa Ricans taking to the streets in a series of anti-privatisation strikes and protests. Costa Rica receives high levels of US backing, has no standing army and only one nationalised industry, its telephone company. Now it seems that greedy American multinationals want to get their hands on it and the locals are voicing their dissent load and clear.

Bolivia has also been the site of active dissent, strikes and demonstrations involving a mass of indigenous people have been taking place. In Bolivia the protests are against the attempted privatisation of water.

For more information, watch this space.

THE PARTY IS OVER

Jobseekers from the Bristol Benefits Action Group (BBAG) transformed a Labour Party South-West office in Bristol into an Enjoyment Zone as part of the March 23rd European Day of Action against Workfare.

Fed up with being labelled as workshy layabouts, spongers and general social malcontents the activists created a party atmosphere. Alongside the music, food, games and party poppers was a stunning performance from BBAG's very own cross-dressing lap dancer. Whilst dancing away proclaiming his "Labour of love" the dancer stated: "I'd rather be a slave to sex than a slave to work."

Bemused office workers looked on and were at a loss with what to do. The police were not called but members of New Labour's elite Flying Squad/Tactical Spin Group (TSG) rushed over to the office from their HQ at the Pithay in an attempt to spray some red gloss over New Labour's right-wing neoliberal policies.

The action was BBAG's latest effort to resist the erosion of the welfare state and the exportation of the New Deal to the rest of Europe. The group is particularly concerned with the government's New Deal programme and recent moves to privatise the benefits system.

New Labour's most recent

attacks on the welfare state have been focused around the issue of privatisation. Already the New Deal programme pays significant financial subsidies to companies to employ people in what is often deskilled, low paid employment. McJobs are no way to provide worthwhile and sustainable employment, and surely money would be better spent on social welfare rather than multinationals like McDonald's.

Furthermore, Chief Clown Gordon Brown has shouted about the number of job vacancies being roughly equal to the number of job-seekers and has made his plans accordingly. Alongside the development of 'Employment Zones' are plans to provide the "long-term unemployed" with mobile phones or pagers so that they can be contacted by a specialised call centre if there is a job in the area. Not such a bad idea? Well it depends on what the jobs are and who provides them.

This has been taken care of by the proposed privatisation of the benefits system, which runs along the development of Employment Zone pilot schemes. Manpower Services already has contracts in pilot areas in Liverpool and Hackney. In Liverpool Manpower has pocketed £250,000 of benefits for New Deal 'overstayers' whose situation they haven't even looked

at. Yet this is small fry when one considers the implementation of "Job Seekers Accounts." This is a system where the private company receives 6 months of Job Seeker's Allowance with which they pay the claimant's dole. However, if they find or force the claimant into work before the end of the period, the company gets to keep the excess. Of course, finding a job for someone is not too hard if (like Manpower) you are the largest employment agency on the planet.

New Labour's strategy is obvious. Bleeding the welfare state dry in order to supplement Blair's fat cat friends is the order of the day. As greedy work-pimps like Reed and Manpower compete for contracts against global bean counters Ernst & Young (who suggested the privatisation policy), New Labour's policy thrust becomes ever more clear. The right to make profit and fill the belly of global capitalism is obviously favoured over an individual's right to have a decent minimum standard of living.

So vehement is Tony about the importance of his shiny new Third Way policy imports from Uncle Bill, that has minced his way around Europe trying to push them on everyone else. So much so that European activist renamed the March 23rd EU meeting "Blair's Summit".

A DIRTY DEVELOPMENT

In February corporate developers Crest Nicholson succeeded in holding Bristol to ransom after backroom deals with the City Council over regeneration of the Canons Marsh area.

Crest, whose two proposed schemes (prestige offices, luxury housing and multiplex cinema) were blocked after widespread grass roots opposition and a shock defeat at Planning Committee, threatened to appeal to the Department of the Environment unless the Council gave them a third chance. Despite Crest's failure to meet sustainable, mixed development criteria in both proposals the Council - joint landowners of the site along with Lloyds TSB and British Gas - duly extended their contract.

One local opponent of Crest, referring to the mysterious incineration of a listed structure on the site, said: "It's a protection racket. They can burn down as many buildings as they like, but we're not going to give in to them." Another called on people to unite against Crest: "Ordinary people can't be overwhelmed by those in power with enormous resources. People are disillusioned by corporate image-fixing and spin-doctoring."

DIARY

END TIBETAN TORTURE

APRIL
22nd-28th: *TV Turn Off Week* - tune in to reality and kill the box! f/fi: White Dot, PO Box 2116, Hove BN3 3LR, <info@whitedot.org>

May
4th: *Justice For The Chattanooga Three* - talk by former Black Panther and veteran anarchist Lorenzo Komboho Ervin; 7.30pm Malcolm X Centre, Bristol; f/fi: Kebele

4th: *Beyond All Ethics* - national co-ordinated protests against BAE Systems, including London, Bristol and Nottingham, plus autonomous electro-activism; f/fi: CAAT, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ 020 7281 0297

<enquiries@caat.demon.co.uk>
<http://www.gn.apc.org/caat>

6th: *Cannabis Carnival*, London - 1pm, anti-prohibition march from Kennington Park (nearest tube: Oval); 2pm, carnival at Brockwell Park, Brixton; f/fi: International Cannabis Coalition, PO Box 2243, London W1A 1YF Tel: 0171 637 7467

< m a y 2 0 0 0 @ s c h m o o c o . u k >
<http://www.schmooc.co.uk/may2000.htm>

13-15th: Weekend of action in the Itzoz Dam, in Basque.

27th: *Reclaim The Streets*, Plymouth - a day of culture excluding cars, bring implements of resistance to Bretonside coach & bus station, 12 noon

JUNE

3rd: *Action Against Capitalism*, Birmingham - Earth First! in Central England / Birmingham Action Alliance present... Let's Clown Around! No to WTO; meet 11.30am, central library, Birmingham; f/fi: Earth First! in Central England 07044 057880

<Earth-First-ce@go.to>
<http://www.Earth-First-ce.go.to/>

7th-11th: *Earth First! Summer Gathering*, Snowdonia - workshops, skillsharing, networking, fun, no cops, cameras or hacks, please leave dogs at home; camping only, please bring £10 to contribute to costs; f/fi: Send SAE to: EF! Gathering c/o Norwich Direct Action Forum, PO Box 487, Norwich NR2 3AL

<summergathering@yahoo.co.uk> 07931 308091
<http://www.eco-action.org/gathering> 0113 262 9365 for f/fi/share info

10th-18th: *Stop The Arms Trade Week* - a week of information and action; f/fi: CAAT, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ 020 7281 0297

<enquiries@caat.demon.co.uk>
<http://www.gn.apc.org/caat>

JULY

15th: *Protest Naked* - conscious stripping for the right to wear yet birthday suit in public, 2pm outside New Scotland Yard, London; f/fi: The Freedom To Be Yourself, 208 Foleshill Road, Coventry CV1 4JH <thehumanmind@yahood.co.com>

<http://www.geocities.com/thehumanmind/>

Bristol Free Tibet Society raises awareness of the cultural oppression in Tibet, invaded by China in 1959 and has been occupied ever since.

There have been over 1.2 million deaths, more than 6,000 Buddhist monasteries have been destroyed and thousands jailed for political reasons, including the ten year old Panchen Lama, now believed to be held in China. Vibrant Tibetan culture has been crushed through China's mass immigration policy which means there are now 7.2 million Han Chinese - given priority in

education, healthcare and employment - to 6 million Tibetans.

Many members of the Society have been to either Tibet or Dharmasala (seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile), and have had personal contact with some of the 130,000 refugees forced to flee by Chinese policies. To mark 41 years spent in exile by the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, the Free Tibet Society will be holding a range of events throughout the year.

f/fi: Call Brendon 0117 973 1407 or Fiona 0410 818900 to get on the email list.

NEW BORN BABES

Bristol-based activists have helped set up Subvertise, a website providing sabotaged advertising imagery.

"Subvertising is the Art of Cultural Resistance," said a spokesman, "it's the 'writing on the wall', the rewording of billboards, the spoof T-shirt; but it's also the mass act of defiance at a street protest. The key process involves redefining our environment from the corporate beast."

Remember: "Art is not a mirror with which to reflect the world. It is the hammer to smash it with."

f/fi <http://www.subvertise.org/>

Subscribing to the notion that "libraries give us power", Penzance's LOFT - the Library Of Free Thought - offers a wide range of books, pamphlets and magazines in the revolutionary vein.

"Our aim is to promote and take action for a society free of any form of hierarchy and domination," says a spokesperson. It's a subscription system and only costs a pound a year, so break out the reading specs, cause information is the bomb.

f/fi LOFT, PO Box 19, Penzance <loft33@btinternet.com> 01735 331236

SNOOOPING SOUTH WEST

Welcome to the IntelliGent's Agency, where he reveals juicy tit-bits of information and insider knowledge. Have your notebooks handy and sharpen your pencils as this month the Gent has some interesting info to share...

Sign O'The Times?

What with all those anti-activism stories appearing in national newspapers pre-MayDay/Terrorism Bill - you know, "RTS stockpiling weapons in bunkers across London", "Eco-Terrorists Exposed", that sort of thing - you'd almost think there was some sort of smear campaign going on. Well, if you fancy discussing journalistic ethics with the hacks who carry out these sub-Clockwork Orange antics, then email Mark Batt <macaroni@line1.net> or Jonathon Ungoed-Thomas aka 'Jo' at <cjoh@hotmail.com>, both from the Sunday Times with your thoughts.

New Labour, New Pager

'Corporate Relations Manager' Shaun Parker's job is to "promote good relationships between the Labour Party and the commercial sector" - you know, convincing big business that New Labour is pro-capitalism and all that - and you can page him on 0468 526222. His chum Callum Collins (01399 757723) is the regional press officer, and always keen to discuss the finer points of spin.

Heidi Hi, Haider!

If you fancy brushing up your deutsch, fax your antifash messages of goodwill to Austrian fascist Jörg Haider at: 00 43 463 536 2100.

CONTACTS•CONTACTS•CONTACTS

GROUPS & CAMPAIGNS

NB: Greenleaf Box's are at:
82 Colston Street, Bristol BS1 5BB

Bath Earth First!; PO Box 426, Bath 01249 713742

Bath GE Group; 01225 447323

Bath Hunt Sabs; PO Box 426 01225 312688

Bristol Anti-Fascist Action; c/o London AFA, BM 1734, London WC1N 3XX

Bristol Benefits Action Group; Box 77, Greenleaf, <bbag11@hotmail.com>

Bristol Free Tibet Group; 24 Sydenham Road, Cotham, Bristol BS6 5SJ <sd7134@bristol.ac.uk>

Chiapas Link; Box 79, Greenleaf Cornwall Hunt Sabs; PO Box 8, Newquay, Cornwall 01736 332527

Dorset GEN; The Old Library, East Street, Bridgport, Dorset 01308 482548

Dorset Hunt Sabs; PO Box 1119, Dorchester DT1 1ED

Earth Circus Network; CREATE Centre, Smeaton Road, Bristol BS1

Exeter FoE; <http://www.eclipse.co.uk/exeter/foe/>

Exeter Left; PO Box 185, Exeter, EX4 4EW. <http://www.exeterleft.freesserve.co.uk/>

Glastonbury GE Group; 01458 834787

Kebele Kulture Projekt; 14 Robertson Road, Eastville, Bristol BS5 0117 939 9469 <kebele@marsbard.com>

North Devon Animal Defence; c/o 63-64 Boutport Street, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 0QB 01271 830842

OPM Support Group; c/o 43 Gardner Street, Brighton BN1 1UN <opmsg@eco-action.org>

Plymouth Anti-Fur Campaign; PO Box 180, Plymouth PL4 8YG

Plymouth Hunt Sabs; PO Box 129, Plymouth PL1 1RY

Radstock Against GE;

01761 435563

Set Up For Life (campaign to free Gary Mills and Tony Poole); PO Box

4739, Birmingham B11 1LG 0121 246 0703 or c/o Kebele

Somerset Against GE; 01373 831020

South Dorset Anti-Bloodsports; PO Box 1119, Dorchester DT1 1ED

STAR (Solidarity Through Active Resistance); PO Box 19, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 2YP

South Devon Earth First! Totnes Community Office, Birdwood House, 44 High Street, Totnes, Devon

Somerset ABC/Sabs/GEN; c/o PO Box 478, Taunton TA2 7YR

Stop Hinkley; Jim Duffy, Rydon Lodge, West Quantoxhead, Taunton TA4 4DW

SWARM (regional joint actions); c/o WCA Network, Box 80, Greenleaf, <wc99@hotmail.com>

Taw/Torrige Campaign; c/o Joanne, The Conifers, 38 West Yelland, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 3HF 01271 860989

Torquay Hunt Sabs; 01803 299509

Totnes Genetics Group; PO Box 77, Totnes TQ9 5ZJ 01803 840098

<info@togg.freesserve.co.uk>

<http://visitweb.com/togg>

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

Bristle (Bristol activist zine); Box 25, Greenleaf, <bristo@bristle.co.uk>

<http://www.bristle.co.uk/>

Do Or Die (EF! journal); c/o Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY

Earth First! Action Update (EF! newsletter); PO Box 17A, Newcastle NE99 1TA

i-Contact (alternative video network); 0117 914 0188 <i-contact@gifford.co.uk>

Interference (radical radio group); Box 6, Greenleaf, Kernow FIN (Cornish info sheet); Box FIN, Bread, Bread Street, Penzance, Cornwall

Squall (webzine & Download paper copy); PO Box 8959, London N19 5HW <http://www.squall.co.uk/>

Urban 75 (underground news site); <http://www.urban75.com/>